

Canned...

by

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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Thin and manicured fingers are rapidly typing on a calculator keyboard with dexterity.

FEMININE LAUGHS and WHISPERS can be heard around, mixed with TYPING NOISES.

HORATIO, an ageless ordinary man, is leaned over his calculator. Stuck in his gray suit, he wears thick scale glasses. Behind him, a pile of files.

He works in a small office, surrounded by THREE SECRETARIES.

The women are chatting, taking not notice of him.

Horatio swiftly glances to one of them: JASSIE. She is in her mid-thirties, blonde with curly hair.

He keeps typing with frenzy.

The women keep chatting, as if Horatio would not exist.

INT. OFFICE - ELEVATOR - DAY

Working day is over.

Horatio is about to take the stairs down when he notices Jassie entering in the elevator. They stare at each other. She smiles. Horatio lowers his chin.

JASSIE

Would you share the elevator with  
me today Mister Horatio?

Horatio hesitates, then, finally, joins her.

The doors slide closed.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Horatio looks real queasy. Is it the girl or the place?

HORATIO

(stuttering)

I-- I don't like elevators.

A perspiration drip trickles on his temple.

JASSIE  
 (charming)  
 Even with me?  
 (different tone)  
 I see what you mean. Last week  
 I've been stuck between two  
 floors for two long hours. I was  
 scared to death. As if I was  
 canned.

Horatio is obviously attracted by the woman, but too shy to make a step ahead.

His breath becomes heavy.

JASSIE  
 Would you mind giving me a ride  
 to--

She stops.

JASSIE  
 Sorry. I forgot you ain't got a  
 car.  
 (sigh)  
 Too bad.

HORATIO'S POV: JASSIE'S FACE IS DISTORTED AS THE PLACE AROUND HIM. THE ELEVATOR WALLS LOOK LIKE GETTING CLOSER

He has to recline against the wall.

JASSIE  
 Are you alright?

Horatio tries to smile and is about to talk back when the elevator stops and the doors slide open. He can breathe now.

JASSIE  
 (stepping out)  
 Have a nice evening.

Horatio does not move, staring at Jassie stepping away. He takes a tiny box from his pocket, opens it, and swallows a pill.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Horatio is slowly walking down a street. The sky is gray and drizzling.

He walks instinctively, like a robot, carefully stopping before crossing the streets.

EXT. STREET - BUS STOP - DAY

Horatio rushes to a bus stop, but the bus shows him its butt and speeds away.

Out of spite, Horatio keeps walking.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Horatio walks down the street, when he stops in front of a large colored board:

LEE'S AUTO SALES & SERVICE

He hesitates for a short while and enters the lot.

EXT. AUTO SALES USED-CAR LOT - DAY

Hundred of used cars are parked here. Every kind of cars, every style, every age.

Horatio wanders around when he suddenly stops. He faces a dusty black 1973 Monte Carlo Chevrolet with tainted windows. He looks fascinated, under a spell.

He steps closer and barely runs his fingers on the back wing, as if he would not dare to touch the car.

Putting his hand against the tainted windshield, Horatio cannot discern the interior. He only can see his own reflection.

He jumps when a hand touches his shoulder. He turns his head up to face a jovial TALL MAN wearing a white suit and stetson.

TALL MAN

Nice car, isn't it? Chevy second generation. Leather seats, automatic transmission, four-barrel carburetor. A non-smoker Country singer owned it.

Horatio draws a shy but suspicious smile.

TALL MAN

My name is Lee. I forgot to welcome you at Lee's Auto sales and service. Twenty-four years of experience. Here, you're the star who deserves his car.

HORATIO

But-- does she-- work?

LEE  
As the day she was made.

Lee takes a key out his pocket and slides it into the Chevy lock.

The door resists a bit, but finally opens.

LEE  
Well, but the engine is just  
clockwork.

Horatio leans to look inside. Everything is perfect. He sits behind the steering wheel and grabs it with both hands.

He looks like a brand new man.

LEE  
Well?

Horatio doesn't know what to say.

LEE  
Want me to take you for a ride?

HORATIO  
(happy)  
Sure.

Horatio moves aside on the death seat, while Lee sits behind the steering wheel.

Lee starts the engine that PURRS like a kitten.

The Chevy slowly moves ahead.

INT. CHEVY - DAY

The Chevy speeds on a highway. The sun pierces the clouds.

Lee exults.

LEE  
Geez! What a car! Must have been  
created just after Eve by God  
himself!

At his side, Horatio shares his enthusiasm.

Lee presses a button.

LEE  
Automatic windows.

The window automatically goes down. Fresh air sweeps Horatio's face. He closes his eyes for a while, feeling good.

EXT. AUTO SALES USED-CAR LOT - DAY

The Chevy drives back into the lot and stops by the sales office.

Lee stops the engine.

LEE  
So, what do you think?

HORATIO  
Tempting, but--

LEE  
But?

HORATIO  
How much?

LEE  
Only ten grand.  
(a pause)  
I repaired her myself.

He turns the radio on. SMOOTH JAZZ MUSIC is playing in the car. Horatio runs his fingers on the dashboard, lowers the sun-glare shield, opens the glove box, hesitating.

HORATIO  
It's a lot of money. I don't know  
if I can afford it.

Lee slightly lifts his hat with his thumb.

LEE  
So, you're a haggle man? I knew  
it. Okay, let's say six thousands  
and not a buck less.

Horatio is still hesitating.

LEE  
Come on Mister. This is a good  
price for a beauty like this.  
Check it out on Internet.  
(a pause)  
Remember, you're the star who  
deserves his car.

HORATIO  
(indecisive)  
I ain't got any cash on me. Or  
credit card. Maybe tomorrow--

Lee raises his hand.

LEE  
(interrupting)  
Maybe tomorrow will be too late.  
Gimme a cheque. You have a good  
face. I know you wouldn't be the  
kind of man who would sting me.

He gets off the car.

LEE  
I trust you.

Horatio stays seated, still hesitating.

LEE  
You won't regret it. It'll be the  
deal of your life.

Horatio gets off the Chevy at his turn.

HORATIO  
It'd been a while since the last  
time I drove.

LEE  
Come on Mister. Driving a car is  
like riding a bicycle. Or even  
like making love to a woman. Once  
you've done it--

INT. CHEVY - EVENING

The day breaks.

Horatio clumsily drives the Chevy. He has taken his jacket  
off and rolled up his sleeves. He looks not much reassured,  
but he is happy.

The radio is still playing some SMOOTH JAZZ MUSIC.

Horatio tests different switches: automatic windows,  
headlights, direction lights...

He looks like a little boy playing with his new toy.

He turns into a street.

INT. CHEVY - NIGHT

Horatio carefully drives into a long and deserted avenue. Night has come. Rain starts to fall.

The wipers sweep the windshield. The Chevy headlights light the street.

As the rain falls harder, Horatio gets closer to the windshield, eyes half closed, trying to discern the road in front of him.

He is about to turn on the right, but a one-way sign deters him. Sighing, he keeps driving, looking for his way. He looks lost.

Nervous, he pulls on the gear lever, but the gear awfully creaks.

Suddenly, Horatio notices his headlights are getting weaker.

On the instrument panel, a drop in potential switches off every tiny lamp. The radio fades out. Then, the headlights are gone. So the wipers.

Horatio taps on the panel. No success.

He pulls up on the side of the avenue and stops in front of a fire hydrant.

Horatio stops the engine.

HORATIO  
What's the hell?

He is about to open the door but it looks stuck. He pushes it with his shoulder. The door would not open.

He moves on the passenger seat and tries the other door. It is stuck too!

Horatio pulls and pushes the door lock but nothing happens.

He starts to worry.

He turns the ignition key to start the engine. Nothing happens. Twice, three times. No way!

Horatio's breath becomes heavier, his eyes rolling. He unties his tie. He looks like a fish out of the water.

Suddenly, he sees a MAN walking down the avenue to him.



EXT. AVENUE - NIGHT

The Chevy is parked on the side of the avenue. Through the tainted windows, Horatio cannot be seen.

INT. CHEVY - NIGHT

Horatio's face is lighted with hope. He rushes on the Chevy horn, but it does not work.

Horatio is gasping, sweating.

HORATIO  
(shouting)  
Hey, you!

The man crosses the car and keeps on his way.

HORATIO  
(shouting)  
Hey! I'm talking to you!

He hits the window with his fists.

HORATIO  
(shouting)  
Hey!!

The man is gone.

Out of breath, Horatio's desperately looks for something to help him. He searches everywhere: the glove box, the doors, under the seats...

HORATIO  
(triumphing)  
Yes!

He takes a tiny screwdriver out.

Meticulously, he takes the door panel out and tries to unscrew the mechanism when the screwdriver breaks.

HORATIO  
Shit!  
(furious)  
Shit! Shit! Shit! Shit!

He cannot breathe anymore.

HORATIO'S P.O.V.: his view is blurred.

He takes his pillbox out and swallows a pill. His manicured hands are now greasy.

SIGH

He looks better.

With his feet, he violently kicks the window, but the glass won't break.

Suddenly, he feels a presence. In his back, outside of the Chevy, a YOUNG PROSTITUTE checks her make-up in the window reflection, grimacing.

Horatio swiftly moves to the right window and hits the glass with both hands.

HORATIO  
(yelling)  
Hey!!

The young prostitute reddens her lips, unaware of Horatio's shouting.

HORATIO  
(yelling)  
Hey! Can't you see me?!

He takes one of his shoes off and hits the glass with the heel.

EXT. AVENUE - NIGHT

The young prostitute jumps when she sees the trembling window, but cannot hear Horatio.

Frightened, she steps away.

INT. CHEVY - NIGHT

Forlorn, Horatio sits back behind the steering wheel and tries to start the engine again.

Nothing happens.

Horatio is at the verge of the nervous breakdown. He hopelessly hits his forehead on the steering wheel, sobbing.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CHEVY - DAY

The sun arises.

Horatio is sleeping, SNORING, his head still on the steering wheel. He suddenly wakes up in a jump.

The Chevy has moved.

Horatio looks around as if he did not know where he was. Steam has covered every window.

The Chevy shakes.

Horatio rushes to the window, wipes the steam off the glass, and realizes what is happening. A deep distress can be seen in his eyes.

Two steel cables are circling the car, bracing it, to finally lift it up.

The Chevy is now slightly swaying.

Fear takes over Horatio. He frantically jumps to and forth in the car, trying to make it budge.

The Chevy is heavily put on a pound carrier. TWO MEN are now busy fasten the car and get into the truck.

HORATIO

Hey! Wait! I'm here!! There's someone in that car!! Stop it!!

The truck pulls up and drives through the city.

The streets are animated, busy at this early hour of the day. People rush, running for their bus, hurrying to go to work, walking their dog. Life simply goes on.

Like a maniac, Horatio hits the window, YELLS at people, waving. He slides from a seat to the other, despairingly trying to be seen.

The truck stops at a traffic light.

There, Horatio sees Jassie standing on the sidewalk, lighting a cigarette.

HORATIO

Jassie!! It's me!! Horatio!! I'm here!!

Instinctively, Jassie looks up at the Chevy, breathing her cigarette smoke in.

HORATIO

Yes! Jassie! Can you see me?!

He waves at her.

HORATIO

Jassie!! Help me!!

Emerging from her thoughts, Jassie keeps on her way.

Clenched teeth, his face distorted and glued on the window glass, Horatio, horrified, sees her stepping way.

The truck moves on.

HORATIO  
(with despair)  
NOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

LATER

The Chevy "drives" now on a suburban road, surrounded by factories and warehouses.

Horatio is out of control.

He takes another pill.

EXT. AUTO GRAVEYARD - DAY

The truck arrives in the middle of a large auto graveyard. The place is a veritable maze of old, rusted cars, piled up helter skelter, frozen in time.

Broken glass, mangled engine parts, garbage and litter... along with hundreds of spent shell casings, are scattered in the dirt.

A nightmare scenery.

INT. CHEVY - DAY

The truck roughly puts the Chevy on the ground and drives away.

Quietness is back inside the car. The only sound is Horatio's HEAVY AND UNEVEN BREATHING as if he was missing air.

His glasses are covered with steam and perspiration.

Suddenly, as if he knew what is gonna happen, his shrieking fills his "bowl".

A large steel claw clasps the Chevy, SMASHING the doors windows in an UNREAL EXPLOSION.

The Chevy is gently lifted and brought into car crusher like a domino on a table.

Horatio keeps hysterically SCREAMING.

The huge lateral vises start to mash the Chevy in a TERRIBLE NOISE. Power is now back inside the car. Radio turns on and the SMOOTH JAZZ MUSIC fills the interior.

Horatio SHRIEKS for the last time.

Front and back vises are now crushing the Chevy, finally forming a small dice in a metallic ruffling.

Slowly, the crusher releases the dice.

Silence comes back.

Horatio's scale glasses are now inset in the Chevy dice metal.

FADE OUT: